

ACICLOVIR (oral)

(also known as ACYCLOVIR)

Aciclovir is an antiviral medicine used to treat viral infections, such as cold sores, chicken pox and shingles.

The following table is to be completed by a health practitioner (e.g. doctor, pharmacist, nurse, midwife):

Reason for antiviral:	
Start date/planned duration:	
My doctor's name:	
Doctor's contact details:	

How do I take aciclovir?

- Aciclovir tablets should be swallowed whole and can be taken with or without food.
- Start taking aciclovir as soon as possible, once prescribed by your doctor.
- **Make sure you drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated** while taking this medicine (at least 1.5 – 2 L per day), to prevent harm to your kidneys. If you have been instructed to restrict your fluid intake for other reasons (such as heart failure), then discuss this with your doctor.
- To make sure aciclovir works the best it can, it is important to take this medicine as prescribed by your doctor and to not miss doses.

What do I need to be aware of before I take aciclovir?

- Discuss any **pre-existing medical conditions** with your doctor.
- Discuss **other medicines you are currently taking or plan to start taking** (including herbal and over-the-counter medicines) with your doctor and/or pharmacist. This is to ensure aciclovir is safe to take together with your current medicines.

The information contained in this brochure is for educational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for consultation with a doctor or health care professional. Ask your pharmacist or doctor if you have any additional questions or would like more detailed information about this medicine. **Last reviewed:** 23rd January 2024 | **Next review** by February 2027.

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- **Pregnancy and Breastfeeding:** Aciclovir is considered safe to use in pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Common side effects of aciclovir:

- Aciclovir is generally well tolerated in most people.
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and headache; usually mild and improves over a few days.

Rare reactions and/or side effects of aciclovir to be aware of:

- **Allergic reactions** such as a rash, itch, blisters or red skin spots; stop taking this medicine and see your doctor.
- **Signs of a serious allergic reaction**, such as difficulty breathing or swelling of the face, eyes or lips; call for an ambulance immediately OR present to the accident and emergency department at your nearest hospital immediately.
- Aciclovir may make you feel **light-headed and worsen your ability to concentrate**. If you are feeling these symptoms, do not drive or use tools or machinery. Drinking alcohol may also worsen these effects.
- **Changes in mood or behaviour**. Symptoms may include confusion, anxiety, seeing or hearing things (such as hallucinations). This is more likely with high doses. See your doctor if these side effects occur.
- **Changes in kidney function and/or reduced blood cells in your body**. Signs of reduced blood cells include unexplained tiredness, shortness of breath when exercising, dizziness, bleeding, bruising, or looking pale. During prolonged treatment (for example, longer than 2 weeks), your doctor may request a blood test to check the number of blood cells in your body and your kidney function.